SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

The Royal Society of Canada announces its annual meeting in Montreal, May 27th, the session lasting one week. In the words of the preliminary circular, which has been mailed to us, it is anticipated that the meeting will be attended by many distinguished persons, eminent in literature and science, from Europe and the United States, as well as from the Dominion of Canada. The ordinary sessions of the society will be held in the buildings of the McGill University, and the popular evening lectures will be delivered in the Queen's Hall on St. Catherine Street. The museums and art galleries, with the educational, industrial, and other institutions of the city will be opened to visiting members and associates. Local excursions to places of interest in the neighborhood will be arranged for, and receptions, garden parties, and entertainments of various kinds will also be provided. It is also proposed to keep a directory, wherein the names and addresses of all those attending the meeting will be registered, and thus members and associates will be enabled to communicate one with another without delay. The committee are engaged in the preparation of a hand-book, for gratuitous circulation among intending visitors, which will include an historical account of the society, together with other interesting scientific and local information, a copy of which will be sent on application. Sir Donald A. Smith is chairman, and J. A. Beaudry, C.E., and W. J. Smyth, Ph.D., honorary local secretaries. All persons interested in literature and science may become associates for this meeting, and are cordially invited by the local committee to be present thereat.

Joseph Leidy, M. D., Professor of Human Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania, and president of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, died April 30th. He was born in Philadelphia, September 9th, 1823. His father, Philip Leidy, was a native of Montgomery county, Pa., and his ancestors on both sides were Germans from the valley of the Rhine.

His taste for natural history was exhibited at a very early age, and received judicious encouragement from the master of the school where he acquired the rudiments of an English education. At the age of sixteen he left school with the intention of becoming an artist, as his father proposed.

In the meantime, however, much of his leisure had been passed in a wholesale drug store near his home. His time here was so well spent that the proprietor did not hesitate, when an opportunity offered, to recommend him as competent to take temporary charge of a retail drug store belonging to a customer. He was encouraged by his success in filling the trust thus reposed in him to study the properties and art of compounding drugs as a profession. His study of nature, while thus occupied, had not been neglected. To botany and mineralogy he had added comparative anatomy, his first practical studies in that branch having been made on a barn-door fowl and a common earth-worm. So absorbed did he become in his anatomical studies that, at the suggestion of his mother and with the consent of his father, he gave up all intention of becoming either artist or apothecary, and resolved to devote himself to that profession which would afford him the best opportunity for pursuing those studies from which it was now evident he could not easily withdraw himself. In the autumn of 1840, therefore, he began the study of medicine, devoting his first year to practical anatomy.

Having entered the office of Dr. Paul B. Goddard, he attended three full courses of lectures in the University of Pennsylvania, presented a thesis on "The Comparative Anatomy of the Eye of Vertebrated Animals," and graduated as doctor of medicine in the spring of 1844. Immediately after receiving his degree his first work in connection with the university was as assistant in the chemical laboratories of Drs. Hare and James B. Rogers. He began the practice of medicine in the fall of 1844, and continued it for two years, when he resolved to devote himself entirely to teaching. He was elected Professor of Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania in 1853. In 1871 he was appointed Professor of Natural History in Swarthmore College. In 1845 he was elected a member of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and in 1846 the chairman of its board of curators. In 1882 he became its president.

Dr. Leidy's work covered a wide range of subjects. He was a good mineralogist, botanist, and zoologist. His original work was done in zoology and in the paleontology of the Vertebrata. He first determined the identity of the *Trichina spiralis* of man with that of the hog, and discovered many new forms of Entozoa. His early researches into the anatomy of insects and of other invertebrates are well known. His later work was in the field of vertebrate paleontology, of which science in America he laid the foundations. His most important work outside of this field is his Monograph of the Fresh-Water Rhizopoda of North

America, which is especially valuable for its admirable illustrations, drawn and colored by himself.

Dr. Leidy received the Walker prize of the Boston Society of Natural History, and the Lyell medal of the Geological Society of London. He received the degree of LL.D. from Harvard University. At the time of his death he was president of the faculty of the Wagner Free Institute of Science, and of the Department of Biology of the University of Pennsylvania; also of the American Anthropometric Society, to which body his brain has been committed for examination and report.

Professor Leidy was a man of fine presence, and was possessed of a sonorous voice. He was an admirably lucid lecturer, and had excellent artistic skill. In his disposition he was retiring and even timid, and his sympathies were easily roused. His interest was readily enlisted on behalf of "the under dog in the fight"; and the person who appealed to this side of his character was rarely disappointed. From an intellectual point of view, he was an acute and accurate observer, and a tireless investigator. Of the systematic and generalizing faculties he possessed little, and for this reason he was no organizer of men. In fact, he was indifferent to this aspect of human relations, being an "individualist" in this respect, as he was in his scientific pursuits.

American science has sustained a severe loss in the death of Leidy. His life has been a stimulus to the progress of intellectual pursuits in this country, and it will produce much fruit in the future, as it has in the past. Honors came to him and his fellow-citizens will honor themselves by erecting to him a permanent memorial in some conspicuous part of the city of his birth.

WE regret to announce the sudden death, on February 13th, at the age of 77 years, of **Mr. William Davies,** F.G.S., for forty years of the Geological Department of the British Museum, from which he retired as senior assistant some two or three years ago. This veteran paleontologist was widely known and highly esteemed by scientists of all countries for his great knowledge of the fossil back-boned animals, and for the genial readiness with which he imparted it to students and inquirers. His official duties necessarily brought him into frequent contact with the numerous distinguished pilgrims from all parts of the world to the great shrine of natural history in London. His recollections went back to the days of Dean Buckland, Agassiz, Owen, Mantell, Phillips, Hugh Miller, and other great pioneers and founders of the sciences of geology and paleontology. No one, perhaps, regretted

more than he did the removal of the natural history collections from the historic galleries in Bloomsbury. It is certain none labored more strenuously to effect their safe transfer to their new home at South Kensington, and the arrangement of the gallery of fossil fishes, containing the finest collection of fossil fishes in the world, was his especial pride and care. Mr. Davies was remarkable for his unaffected simplicity of manner and modesty of character. He occupied the somewhat rare position in these scribbling days, of knowing more than he wrote, instead of writing more than he knew. Nevertheless, Mr. Davies contributed several instructive and interesting papers to the *Geological Magazine*. In one, "On the Omosaurus," he described the removal to the museum workshops of the huge septarian nodules from the Kimmeridge clay of Swindon, Wiltshire, and the subsequent development therefrom of the remains of "that gigantic British dragon of old time," the *Omosaurus armatus* of Owen, one of the finest specimens of its class in the National Museum. The descriptive catalogue of the Plistocene mammalian remains from Ilford, Essex, of Sir Antonio Brady's collection in the British Museum, was also from his pen.

Some rather sensational journalistic articles were published at the time about this fine collection, comprising the remains of parts of the skeleton of a considerable number of individual specimens of various Rhinoceri (*R. leptorhinus*), primeval oxen (*Bos primigenius*), deer, and especially of the mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*) from the Pleistocene deposits of the valley of the Thames. Mr. Davies used to relate that for some time afterwards people came to the museum and inquired anxiously for the British elephants, and went away quite angry and disappointed when they were shown the series of detached bones, not in the least realizing that a *single* bone often sufficed an anatomist for the reconstruction of an individual animal. They really seemed to expect to see the one hundred and fifty Essex elephants set up all in a row.

Mr. Davies was a great lover of nature, and enjoyed many a botanical ramble over the South Downs; but even when out for a holiday it was not easy to keep him long out of a museum. Then nothing delighted him more than to pore over a nondescript heap of old bones that every one else had given up as hopeless. It was marvelous to watch the patience and skill with which he would select and fit such rough fragments together, and finally build up the limb bone of a rhinoceros or or the spinous processes of the vertebra of an Iguanodon. Mr. Davies will be sincerely regretted by his former chiefs and colleagues, and by many friends. His end was doubtless hastened by anxieties concerning

the illness of his only son, Mr. Thomas Davies, F.G.S., senior assistant of the Mineralogical Department of the British Museum.—AGNES CRANE.

Dr. John LeConte, Professor of Physics in the University of California, died April 29. He belonged to a distinguished scientific family. His father and uncle were both naturalists. His younger brother is a prominent geologist and chemist, and his nephew was an explorer and naturalist and served as chief clerk in the United States mint in this city for the five years preceding his death.

John LeConte was born in Liberty county, Georgia, on the 4th day of December, 1818, graduated at Franklin College, University of Georgia, in 1838, and studied medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York, where he graduated in 1841. He settled in Savannah, Ga., in 1842, and there began the practice of his profession, but in 1846 was called to the chair of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry in Franklin College, which he held until 1855. He lectured on chemistry at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, in 1855–56, and in 1856 became Professor of Natural and Mechanical Philosophy in South Carolina College, at Columbia. In 1869 he was appointed Professor of Physics and Industrial Mechanics in the University of California, and after holding the office of president of the university, in addition to his chair, from 1876 until 1881, he retired to the chair of Physics, which he retained up to the time of his death. His scientific work extended over fifty years.